



Educator Quality

Legislative Advocacy
State Board of Education

State Board Position Statements

- Improve the support for the Teacher Quality and Student Achievement Program.
- Implement legislation to establish an Administrator Quality Program.

Overview

Iowa's Teacher Quality initiatives are reshaping how teachers are compensated and supported. For many, this effort responds to our goal of improving student learning, as well as the critical issues of looming teacher shortages in rural and urban Iowa and a declining comparability of Iowa teachers' salaries with those in other states. The intent of the legislation was to enhance student achievement by investing in teacher professional development and compensation. The original components of Senate File 476: Student Achievement and Teacher Quality Program, passed in 2001, include:

- Mentoring and Induction Supports for all beginning teachers.
- Minimum salary thresholds for beginning and career teachers.
- Eight teaching standards and the requirement for the development of criteria to support the standards.
- Career paths with compensation minimums intended to provide teachers with a mechanism to receive salary enhancements as they demonstrate enhanced skills.
- Professional development systems that promote the implementation of research-based strategies in the classroom including the development of district and individual teacher career development plans.
- Standards-based evaluation processes for teachers.
- Team-based variable pay pilots.

Background/Talking Points

Initiated by Governor Vilsack and the General Assembly in 2001, this landmark legislation provides greater support for teachers by increasing salaries, defining career paths that include rigorous and meaningful professional development, establishing Iowa Teaching Standards, creating a teacher evaluation system and training program, and expanding mentoring

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and induction programming statewide. The program has been funded at \$40 million (FY02 and FY03), \$43.2 million in FY04, \$45.3 million in FY05, and \$69.6 million in FY06.

Each year, as second year teachers move to the career level, they receive additional compensation. Additionally, each year more teachers attain National Board Certification status. Both issues necessitate some growth from the original appropriation. Last session, the legislature funded the equivalent of one additional contract day for every teacher in the state (\$10 million) and designated an additional \$6.625 million for compensating teachers for increased salaries or time spent on professional development. Budget constraints have slowed the implementation timetable of some portions of Teacher Quality policy, but the critical portions are in place statewide and are moving forward. Each year, approximately 3000 beginning (1st and 2nd year) teachers are supported by a mentor. In addition, roughly 2500 administrators have received enhanced evaluator training aligned to the Iowa Teaching Standards. The DE is currently working to implement the Iowa Professional Development Model statewide and reading, mathematics and science content networks on research-based instructional strategies in each area. Last summer and fall, 381 individual educators participated in teacher development academies.

Talking Points:

- Research clearly shows that improved classroom instruction is the primary factor contributing to improved student achievement.
- Research also shows that quality professional development is the primary way to improve teachers' classroom instruction.
- Much more than testing and accountability measures, quality professional development for teachers is the best way to work to improve student achievement.
- This policy, as written, is an integral part of meeting federal NCLB requirements and reducing achievement gaps. Altering the approach promoted by the policy, particularly the teacher evaluation and professional development requirements, could create problems in meeting NCLB requirements and will alter its effectiveness in reducing existing achievement gaps.
- The loss of Phase III funds has seriously affected districts' ability to provide time for professional development just when new research and the ability to implement the best instructional practices to raise student achievement is sorely needed. Funding additional professional development under Educator Quality would help restore needed funding for professional development.
- While the original Teacher Quality legislation temporarily improved Iowa's national ranking on average teacher salaries from 38th to 34th, this year Iowa is ranked 41st (average salary) or 38th (average total salary), an indicator that other states are investing more in efforts to improve the quality of education and educators. The improvement in rank was minimal with considerably more funds needed to substantially improve the ranking.

- With numerous teacher shortage areas, increasing accountability demands, and more diverse student populations, Iowa's teachers deserve the supports envisioned by the original Student Achievement and Teacher Quality legislation. Significant infusion of resources to improve Iowa's ability to attract and retain quality teachers is needed if Iowa is to maintain the overall quality of its educational system.

Background Information: Administrator Quality

The proposal would implement legislation that establishes leadership standards, induction programs for new administrators, evaluation focused on the standards, and individual career development plans for all administrators.

A recent study by McREL indicates that educational administrators are essential to raising student achievement. It suggests that administrators should also receive mentoring, evaluation against a common set of statewide performance standards, and have individual professional development plans aligned to these standards.

Talking Points:

- Administration at the building and district level provides the leadership needed to focus efforts on student achievement.
- Leadership matters. A significant, positive correlation exists between effective school leadership and student achievement.
- Effective leadership can be empirically defined. Contrary to misperceptions that leadership is more art than science, key leadership responsibilities that are significantly correlated with higher student achievement have been identified.
- Effective leaders not only know what to do, but when, how, and why to do it. This is the essence of balanced leadership — knowing not only which school changes are most likely to improve student achievement, but also understanding staff and community members' dispositions to change and tailoring leadership practices accordingly. (McREL)

Key components of draft legislation

- Continue support of the mentoring and induction program for all beginning teachers while including counselors and teacher librarians.
- Increase the minimum salaries of beginning and career teachers by \$1000.
- Modify the existing Career Ladder by removing the Career II level and changing the "Advanced" level to "Teacher Trainer." Implement the Review Panel portion of the original bill as the Teacher Trainer level is funded.
- Implement Teacher Development Academies that produce cadres of Teacher Trainers equipped with high-powered instructional strategies. Teachers will be trained to provide professional development on proven research-based strategies to other teachers. Additional stipends go to those Teacher Trainers delivering professional development on these strategies to other teachers.

- Funding (\$20,000,000) for the equivalent of two additional professional development days with a portion (10%) of that funding available for expenses associated with professional development. This funding would help local districts implement the required District Career and Individual Teacher Career Development Plans. Legislation in FY06 funded the equivalent of one additional day of professional development (\$10 million) and an additional \$6.625 million to compensate teachers for professional development time or salary enhancements. The Department's proposal would combine these funds, increase the amount to \$20 million, and include a 10% set-aside for administrative costs related to delivery of professional development.
- Establish leadership standards and induction programs for new administrators.
- Institute evaluation focused on the standards and individual career development plans for all administrators.
- Every district will have a teacher librarian and a counselor.
- Continuation of National Board Certification (NBC) funding.

Research Support/Additional Resources

Investment in the ongoing professional development of practicing teachers is crucial to continuous improvement in student learning. Strong evidence repeatedly link improvement in student achievement to quality teaching. As noted by researchers Darling-Hammond, "a substantial body of research suggests that one of the most important school determinants of student achievement is the quality of teachers" (National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 1996; Darling-Hammond, 1999). Similarly, Ferguson (1991) stated, "One study of 900 school districts found that spending additional resources on more highly qualified teachers led to greater increases in student achievement than any other use of those resources." Teachers who know a lot about teaching and learning and who work in environments that allow them to know students well are the critical elements of successful learning. The most effective way to improve teaching quality is quality professional development.

What teachers know and do is one of the most important influences on what students learn. The Education Trust completed a synthesis of effective teacher research. They found that teacher quality had a huge impact on student learning gains. They also noted that the gains accumulate over the grade levels. That is, initially similarly achieving students were separated by as many as 50 percentile points three years later based solely on the quality of the teachers they were assigned.

In analyses of students in Texas and Alabama, teachers' expertise accounted for about forty percent of the variation in students' reading and mathematics achievement in grades 1 thru 11 (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2005). Hanushek (1992) estimates that the difference between having a quality teacher can exceed one grade-level equivalent. Sanders and Rivers (1996) argue that the single most important factor affecting student achievement is teachers, and the effects are both additive and cumulative. Further, they contend that lower achieving students are the most likely to

benefit from increases in teacher effectiveness. That is, effective teachers help close achievement gaps.

Teaching is an occupation that loses many of its newly trained members very early in their careers. The data can be used to provide a rough estimate of the cumulative losses of beginning teachers from attrition in their first several years of teaching. The data suggest that after just three years 29% of all beginning teachers have left teaching altogether and after five years 39% have left teaching (Ingersoll, 2001). The data suggest that improvements in the conditions of the teaching job, such as increased support from school administrators, increased salaries, mentoring and induction of new teachers, and improved professional development would all contribute to lower rates of turnover, in turn, diminish school staffing problems and, hence, ultimately, aid the performance of schools.

Mentoring is a formal coaching relationship in which an experienced teacher gives guidance, support, and feedback to a new teacher. Induction goes beyond mentoring to provide an extensive package of supports, professional development, and standards-based assessments and evaluations. It is at the school where key factors influencing new teachers' experiences converge; it is there that induction efforts should be centered. Well-matched mentors, curriculum guidance, collaborative lesson planning, peer observation, and inspired leadership all support new teachers (Johnson et al, 2001).

District and school leadership are critical for school improvement. Efforts to improve educational leadership should build upon the foundation of well-documented and well-accepted knowledge about leadership that already exists. It is known that school leadership is most successful when it is focused on goals related to teaching and learning, and that leadership is necessary but not sufficient for school improvement (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003).

School improvement depends upon effective school leadership. Contemporary school leadership requires a high degree of skill, sophistication, and intuitive ability. Administrators need intensive support in their early years of service. Effective schools have effective principals. Perhaps the most consistent finding in the large body of school effectiveness research is that the success of school improvement efforts is dependent upon leadership. Effective schools have effective principals and effective teacher leaders (Fullan, 1993).

These additional resources describe the potential positive benefits of supporting quality teachers and administrators through standards, mentoring and induction, and professional development:

Professional Development

- Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL):
<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedletter/v13n02/1.html>

- National Conference of State Legislatures:
<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/educ/Research.htm>
- Economic Policy Institute:
http://www.epinet.org/content.cfm/books_teacher_quality_execsum_intro
- Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPR):
<http://www.cpre.org/Publications/pb-07.pdf#search='teaching%20for%20high%20standards%20policymakers'>
- Education Commission of the States (ECS):
<http://www.ecs.org/initiatives/Geringer/Geringer%20Initiative%20Final.pdf#search=pursuit%20quality%20teaching%20five%20key>

Mentoring and Induction

- Center for the Study of Teaching and Policy (CTP):
http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/Brief_three.pdf
- Harvard Education Letter: <http://www.edletter.org/past/issues/2001-ja/support.shtml>
- New Teacher Center at University of California, Santa Cruz:
<http://newteachercenter.org/>
- Center for Teaching Quality (CTQ):
<http://www.teachingquality.org/relatedtqissues/mentoring.htm>

Evaluation

- Clearinghouse of research on the effect of quality performance evaluation:
<http://www.arizonaaea.org/careers.php?page=27>.
- Analysis of standards-based evaluation after 6 years – University of Wisconsin:
<http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v13n7/>
- NGA Center for Best Practices:
<http://www.nga.org/cda/files/1202IMPROVINGTEACHEVAL.pdf>
- Teacher Quality and Student Achievement: A Review of State Policies:
http://cs.mariancollege.edu/mreardon/755/document%20repository/LDH_1999.pdf.

National Board Certification

- Can Teacher Quality be Effectively Assessed?
<http://www.urban.org/publications/410958.html>
- The Impact of National Board Certification Teachers:
<http://www.nbpts.org/pdf/ResRpt.pdf>
- The National Board Certification Research Project (CPRE):
<http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/cpre/tcomp/research/standards/board.php>
- National Board Certified Teachers and Their Students' Performance:
<http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v12n46/>

Administrators

- Association of California Administrators:
http://www.acsa.org/publications/pub_detail.cfm?leadershipPubID=1337

- Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McRel):
<http://www.mcrel.org/topics/productDetail.asp?topicsID=7&productID=144>

Data Support

Summaries of available data describing current state and future projections including potential costs. These data can be found in the Condition of Education Report 2005 (<http://www.state.ia.us/educate/fis/pre/coer/index.html>)

- In 2004-05, the average full-time teacher total salary was \$40,344 while the national average was \$47,750. The average full-time teacher regular salary (salary that does not include extra salary paid for extra curricular and extra duties) was \$39,284.
- In 2004-05, the average full-time beginning teacher total salary was \$27,996, ranking Iowa sixth of nine states in the Midwest region.
- 11.3 percent of teachers in 2004-05 were over the age of 56 and 30.9 percent were 51 or over. Only 7.4% were under the age of 25.
- In 2004-05, 42.2 percent of principals were over the age of 51, 16.3 percent over the age of 56. 60.8 percent of superintendents were over the age of 51, 27.4 percent over the age of 56.
- 2,628 full-time beginning teachers received mentoring and induction programming in 2004-05.
- 4th grade ITBS reading and mathematics performance has increased five consecutive biennia.
- 8th grade ITBS reading has increased the last two biennia and 8th grade mathematics has increased the last three biennia.
- Virtually all students are participating in statewide assessments. Students are no longer “held out of” testing for any reason.
- Iowa is ranked third in the nation in average composite ACT scores in 2004-05.
- Iowa is ranked number 1 in the nation in average SAT scores in 2004-05.
- Iowa’s dropout rate is fourth best in the country in 2004-05.
- Iowa’s graduation rate is third best in the country in 2004-05.

Response to the Critics: Questions and Answers

Question 1: Why is this policy so important?

Answer: This policy employs a unique and proven strategy to improve student learning. The legislation was collaboratively developed by a bipartisan group of legislators, the Governor’s office, Department of Education, and major professional associations. This statute goes directly to the heart of the issue regarding how to best improve student learning – namely, that research shows an investment in improving the quality of instruction in the classroom (making teachers better at what they do) generates a larger positive learning gain than any other type of intervention. If Iowa is to maintain its prominence as a national leader in education, this policy will play a prominent role in that effort.

Question 2: The state has invested millions of dollars in professional development for teachers in the recent past, but our test scores continue to be of concern. Why?

Answer: While millions of dollars were allocated through Phase III, recent research on professional development has affected what we know really works to change instructional practices. The onset of high accountability environments has changed the way educators view best practice. We now have the Iowa Professional Development model, which sets expectations for how quality professional development is structured and delivered. Within this model, teachers are expected to use student performance data, understand effective practices, and implement quality strategies with integrity. This type of professional development is intensive – no longer can we expect one-day workshops to make any meaningful difference in classroom instruction. Teachers now understand that they must approach any conversation about teacher development from at least two perspectives, one of individual growth and the other regarding how they support broader system needs and goals. This new knowledge and approach to teacher development was not implemented statewide with prior resources.

Test scores have not grown significantly but they also have not dropped significantly. More students are being tested, diversity in our student population is growing, and achievement gaps have not closed to the extent that is possible. Investment in professional development is the only investment that makes sense to help teachers raise these student scores.

Question 3: Hasn't this effort resulted in a lot more bureaucratic paperwork?

Answer: No. This effort has fundamentally changed the nature of conversations in school districts regarding student performance, teacher performance, and professional development. Prior to this legislation, teacher evaluations were perfunctory, professional development was fragmented, every district had a different definition of what a “quality” teacher was, teacher pay was slipping, and many teachers were leaving the profession within a few years of experience. This legislation made an instant difference in levels of teacher pay, provided mentoring and induction for new teachers that helped smooth the transition from college to the world of work, set consistent statewide expectations for quality teacher performance, and recentered the work around students and the teacher behaviors that impact students. Iowa is still the only state in the union that has been able to pass such a comprehensive reform package around teacher quality and to this day, continues to be ahead of the curve nationally because of this policy. Many new policies seem cumbersome at first, but as the process becomes more familiar and streamlined, the paperwork is lessened.

Question 4: Does the state investment in one additional day of professional development really make a difference?

Answer: We hope this is the first step in a much more substantial investment in the development of quality teachers. Data shows that more than one full day was added to

teacher contracts as a result of last year's policy for professional development activities. In fact, this part of the policy has been the slowest to implement because of the resources necessary to establish an adequate system of teacher supports aligned to teacher standards and supporting research-based practices.

Question 5: Who decides which practices are best in terms of instructional strategies to be supported by professional development activities?

Answer: We believe the research should decide. The Department of Education has invested a significant amount of time developing what are called Content Networks (<http://www.state.ia.us/educate/ecese/tgt/tc/prodev/main.html>) in the areas of reading, mathematics, and science. These Content Networks are more than simple aggregations of research-based practices in these areas – they go a step farther to systemically evaluate the student performance gains achieved by the given strategies. Iowa was developing these Content Networks in advance of any conversation from the US Department of Education regarding scientifically based research.

Question 6: Wasn't one of the concepts included in the original policy the implementation of a Career Ladder, which would have paid teachers more for demonstrating skill, rather than simply accumulating more years or more courses taken?

Answer: Yes, but the implementation of this career ladder demanded a lot of resources and paperwork – beyond what Iowa's economy could bear in the early stages of this policy. The first two levels of the ladder, Beginning and Career I teacher, were implemented. The Department of Education still believes some sort of tiered system should be implemented, and that teachers who demonstrate advanced skills in the classroom can help other teachers improve their practices as well.

Question 7: If teaching standards are in place to set a performance bar, why hasn't the state barred even one beginning teacher from getting a standard teaching license?

Answer: We believe this is primarily because of the quality of the support systems before this decision-making benchmark. We have worked hard to build the capacity of the system to develop high quality teachers. Potential teachers are screened before going into teacher preparation programs, are scrutinized in content and pedagogy coursework, must be successful in rigorous field experiences and student teaching, must meet licensing standards, and then must be employed by a school district, where they receive an additional two years of mentoring. It is also a fact that when an individual knows they will not meet the standards, they resign and leave the profession before a recommendation is made to the state to not issue a standard license. In truth, if the end-of-year-two comprehensive evaluation was serving to bar beginning teachers from a standard license, another part of the system before that was likely not serving its purpose.

Question 8: So after five years of implementing this policy, why haven't we seen better improvement in student performance?

Answer: Any research on systems reform or change will say this is a long-term process. Michael Fullan indicates changing the culture in one elementary school can take up to five years. Changing a statewide mind-set is very complex. We need much patience and policy continuity to achieve the noble goal established by this legislation. This will require all parties involved to maintain their commitment to the basic premise of the legislation – that improving teachers' skills is the best way to improve student performance. At the same time, we have improved achievement at 4th and 8th grades and made some gains to close achievement gaps at grades 4, 8, and 11.

Important Legislative and Governmental Stakeholders

House of Representatives Leaders

Rep. Christopher Rants, R (54 – Sioux City)	Speaker of the House christopher.rants@legis.state.ia.us
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Rep. Scott Raecker, R (63 – Urbandale)	Chair – Appropriations scott.raecker@legis.state.ia.us
Rep. Mark Kuhn, D (14 – Charles City)	Ranking Member – Appropriations mark.kuhn@legis.state.ia.us

House of Representatives Committee Leaders

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Rep. Jeff Kaufmann, R (79 – Wilton)	Vice Chair, Education Committee jeff.kaufmann@legis.state.ia.us
Rep. Royd Chambers, R (5 – Sheldon)	Chair – Education Approps. Subcommittee royd.chambers@legis.state.ia.us
Rep. Jo Oldson, D (61 – Des Moines)	Ranking Member, Education Approps. Sub. joanne.oldson@legis.state.ia.us

Other key House legislators on this topic: Danny Carroll (R - Grinnell), Phil Wise (D – Keokuk), Mary Mascher (D – Iowa City), Cecil Dolechek (R – Creston), Rod Roberts (R – Carroll) or any of the other members of the House Standing Education Committee or the Education Appropriations Subcommittee (see link below).

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Senate Leadership

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Groups with which you should advocate on this issue

Farm Bureau Representatives
Chambers of Commerce
Rotary Clubs
Lion's Clubs
PTAs/PTOs
Local newspaper editors
Any Economic Development groups
Local labor union representatives, specifically law enforcement and fire fighters

Groups that are already advocates for this issue

Iowa Association of School Boards
School Administrators of Iowa
Iowa State Education Association
Urban Education Network
Area Education Agencies

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